

SOP Title: Approval of Non-Federal Travel Assistance**March 1, 2006****Deputy Area/Division: Deputy Chief for Management, Ethics Office****Revision:****Page 1 of 4****1. Purpose:**

To provide Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for Approval of Non-Federal Travel Assistance pursuant to 31 USC 1353 administered by the NRCS Ethics Office. This provides the procedure for requesting approval of non-Federal travel assistance to attend a meeting or similar event.

2. Scope:

This SOP will be followed by all personnel requesting approval of non-Federal travel assistance.

3. Outline of Procedure:

- 4.1 Applicability
- 4.2 Prior Approval
 - a. Required Supporting Documentation
 - b. Employee Responsibilities
 - c. Submission and Clearance of the Form AD 1101
 - 1. Supervisory Responsibilities
 - 2. State Ethics Advisor's Responsibilities
 - 3. Responsibilities of the Deputy Chief or State Conservationist
 - 4. Ethics Review and Decision
- 4.3 Post Approval
 - a. Employee Responsibility
 - b. Supervisory Responsibility

4. Specific Procedures:

4.1 Applicability

This procedure applies to approval of non-Federal travel assistance for an employee to attend a meeting or similar event as part of official business. For this purpose, meeting includes a conference, seminar, speaking engagement, symposium, training course, or similar event.

4.2 Prior Approval

a. Required Supporting Documentation

- 1. A written unsolicited offer to pay.
- 2. [Form AD 1101, Approval and Report of Travel Funds Received from Non-Federal Sources](#). A copy of Form AD 1101 is attached as Exhibit 1. Exhibit 2 is a sample of a Form AD 1101 that is ready to be forwarded to the NRCS Ethics Office for review and approval.

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b. Employee Responsibilities

1. Print Form AD 1101: Approval & Report of Travel Funds Received from Non-Federal Sources, from the USDA Ethics Website at www.usda-ethics.net/forms
2. Complete the form: The employee must complete the front and the six (6) questions in the top half of the back of form (2nd page.) Also, make sure you specify the type of business or industry the paying source is engaged in below the response to *Event Information, Item 4*. [The employee does not complete the conflict of interest analysis.]
3. Sign the Form as traveler, where indicated.
4. Submit the form and a copy of the unsolicited offer through your supervisor to your servicing ethics advisor. If this is international travel, you must also send a copy of the approved International Travel Form.
5. Timing. Allow 10 days after the NRCS Ethics Office receives all required information for the ethics review and decision.

c. Submission and Clearance of the Form AD 1101

1. Supervisory Responsibilities.

- a. Supervisors recommending approval of Form AD 1101 will forward the form and supporting documents to the servicing ethics advisor. Supervisors should not sign or forward a form that does not, in their opinion, reflect activity properly considered official NRCS business or that they otherwise do not want to have approved. [There is no place on the form the supervisor to sign.]
- b. Supervisors must not issue a travel authorization to allow for acceptance of non-Federal travel assistance until and unless Ethics approval has been obtained from the Deputy Chief for Management. For travel involving non-Federal travel assistance, a separate travel authorization must be issued with an appropriate notation of the specific non-Federal travel assistance that has been approved. An open travel authorization may not be used if the travel involves non-Federal assistance.

2. State Ethics Advisor's Responsibilities.

- a. The state ethics advisor will prepare the conflict of interest analysis and advise the STC on whether it is appropriate to recommend approval.

3. Responsibilities of the Deputy Chief or State Conservationist.

- a. To be approved, the Form AD 1101 must have the signature of the Deputy Chief or STC on page 2, next to the answer to questions #4 regarding the nature and sensitivity of any matter pending in NRCS affecting the interests of the non-Federal source.
- b. If the Deputy Chief or State Conservationist supports the request, he or she will forward the package to the NRCS Ethics Office for further processing. All Form AD 1101 requests from the states must be forwarded through the Regional Assistant Chief (RAC).
- c. Allow 10 days from the date Form AD 1101 and supporting information is received by the NRCS Ethics Office for a decision on the matter.

4. Role of the RAC.

The RAC will review requests from states to insure against acceptance of non-Federal travel assistance from persons or organizations with sensitive matters currently pending before the Agency, or acceptance to perform work for which NRCS receives appropriated funds.

5. Ethics Recommendation and Decision

- a. The NRCS Ethics Office will evaluate the request and, if appropriate, recommend approval by the Deputy Chief for Management.
- b. Authority to approve a Form AD 1101 rests with the Deputy Chief for Management (Designated Ethics Official).

4.3 Post Approval

- a. Employee Responsibility. Within 7 working days after the trip ends, the traveler must notify the NRCS Ethics Office and request Agency authorization for acceptance of any non-Federal travel assistance not approved prior to travel. Acceptance of any such funds must be consistent with Federal Travel Regulations, Chapter 304, Payment of Travel Expenses from a Non-Federal Source, Subchapter A—Employee's Acceptance of Payment From a Non-Federal Source for Travel Expenses.
- b. Supervisory Responsibility. Supervisors should not approve a voucher for travel involving non-Federal travel assistance for which required ethics approval for any such assistance has not been obtained.

5. Technical Contact

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/s/

3/1/06

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